

All Saints Day (observed)  
“Arrayed in White!” Revelation 7:9-13  
November 3, 2024  
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this All Saints Day is from our first reading in Revelation 7:9-10.

**“9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb! 11 All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying:**

**“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”**

**13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?”**

So far the text...

Who? Asked an elder. Beholding such an amazing vision, John the apostle, was at a loss for words. He was tongue tied. All the sights and sounds left him spell bound as he took it all in. So, an elder asked a question... to get a conversation started. Who? For a conversation was needed. Who are these arrayed in white robes and where did they come from? That was the conversation starter.

The question didn't need to be asked about who sits on the throne – God the Father of course, and the Lamb, the Son of God. There was no doubt that they were the object of all worship and were receiving all praise, honor, glory and blessing!

But this great multitude around the throne...who are praising God in a loud voice...who are they?

In these last couple of months we've heard a lot of "who?" questions, haven't we? Who is leading in the polls? Who is the betting favorite? Who is going to win the election? Who are you going to vote for? A lot of conversation starters...

And these are important conversations for the well-being of our country. We won't have a definitive answer to who the winners are going to be until Tuesday, or possibly later in the week... And we lift all our prayers to God that He would give to our nation good, just and wise leaders.

Well this conversation that John and an elder began didn't beat around the bush and give leave a person not knowing the answer to the question:

**"Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"**

For right away John picked up the conversation and said to him: **"Sir, you know."**

A most respectful acknowledgement with an eager willingness to hear the answer.

**So, he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple."**

These are the who's who of the Book of Life. These are the ones that have a special relationship with the Lamb. It is so special a relationship that the blood of the Lamb has been used to wash their robes and make them white. These who are arrayed in white, clothed in white are therefore...because of this washing...around the throne of God. These are the ones who can stand before the throne, because and only because they have been clothed in the white robes, the necessary white robes of righteousness that have been graciously given to them through faith in the Lamb.

Who are these? They are the saints, the believers in Christ, who have come out of the great tribulation, kept the faith and proudly wave their palm branches of victory...lovingly wave their palm branches in adoration of the Lamb.

This is the eternal victory celebration in heaven! In this life on earth, there are short lived victory celebrations of World Series champions and their fans, of ticker tape parades. But this celebration that John is witnessing never ends. **"They serve Him day and night in His temple."**

**“And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.”** God is always with them, shepherding them, caring for them, enjoying this beautiful perfect relationship with them.

For in this celebration, there are no protests, no unrest, no uprisings, acts of terrorism or looting. Why? Because all the protesters, terrorists, looters and the like are not present. There is no evil in heaven. It is past.

These arrayed in white have known all this in the past, experienced all this and yet kept the faith. They have come out of the great tribulation! They have been part of the church militant and fought the good fight against evil. They themselves recognized their own evil hearts, their poorness of spirit, and mourned of their sins, repented of their sins and were called blessed. They were comforted by the means of grace God’s Word and Sacraments and received comfort in the forgiveness of their sins.

They received the washing of their sins in their baptism. Jesus provided His very body and blood in the Lord’s Supper to keep them strong in this great tribulation of this world. For they fought against not only their own sinful flesh, but the devil and the world.

Yes, Jesus spoke of this in the beatitudes that we read in our Gospel reading from Matthew 5.

**“they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.”**

The world of unbelievers persecute God’s people. We are experiencing this right now as we stand up and defend God’s Word, proclaim God’s Word and share God’s Word to all people, nations, tribes and tongues! The Word will not return void as the Holy Spirit converts and rescues sinners and convicts those who reject God’s promises in Christ.

Yes, there is a great tribulation which all those arrayed in white experienced. No exceptions. But what does Jesus promise? Blessedness. The communion of saints on earth are blessed children of God even in persecution as they wait to join the saints in heaven.

**“Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”**

Rejoice and be glad! Why? Because there awaits a great reward in heaven, a great prize for the faithful, a Mega prize. For God has made a new earth and a new heaven. He's made it great again.

A great change happens in the moment that a saint, a believer on earth dies. Great rejoicing in heaven begins. For...

**16 They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."**

No evil, no heat, no sadness, no pain, no tears...nothing bad. Only eternal life drinking from the living waters from the Lamb. John writes to us in his first epistle in chapter 3.

**"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."**

Like Him. Perfect, holy, in wonderful bliss and happiness eternally.

Thanks be to God that Jesus, became like us first. He took on our flesh, suffered our punishment on the cross, paid for our sins and rose from the dead to show that He had won the victory!

Yes, the saints in heaven sing this great news of the Gospel. We sing it, proclaim it and believe it here on earth. It is this...

**"Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"** He alone won the world's salvation. It's His. We could never enter heaven by our works. Salvation belongs to God and He graciously gives it to us through faith in the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

**"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."**

**"And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**